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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Tuesday August 16, 1977

CG NIDC 77-190C



NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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Top Secret

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State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Tuesday, August 16, 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA: Situation Report

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[] President Siad on Sunday made his first public statement on the conflict since the fighting escalated last month. In a speech to the nation, Siad implicitly warned the communist countries not to strengthen Ethiopia to the disadvantage of Somalia. He mentioned Cuba by name, but left no doubt that his statements referred also to the USSR. He also warned the Somalis to be prepared to repel an Ethiopian invasion.

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[] The Somali leader said he was surprised that "some great socialist states" had forgotten the principles of "socialism" and were supporting Ethiopian colonialism. He warned those states that if they interfered in the conflict in the Ogaden or Eritrea, Somalia would go to war. By interference, Siad was clearly referring to any Soviet attempt to provide Ethiopia with the military means to roll back the Somali forces in the Ogaden or the separatist guerrillas in Eritrea.

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[] Siad said that on the basis of Cuba's commitment to "socialism" he could not believe reports of Cuban involvement in the Ogaden fighting, but if the reports proved true, Cuban support for Ethiopian colonialism would change the concept of "socialism"--a clear warning to the Cubans to stay out of the fighting.

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[] On Saturday, Tass issued another statement calling for an immediate, peaceful end to the fighting in the Ogaden under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity. Calling on the leaders of both Somalia and Ethiopia to display "statesmanlike wisdom and restraint," the Tass statement stressed that the current situation in the Ogaden is full of peril and is the cause of serious concern among Soviet leaders.

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[] The official Somali news agency "reminded" Tass on Sunday that Somalia had clearly stated it is not involved in the fighting, which involves only the Western Somali Liberation Front and Ethiopian forces. The Somali statement said the conflict was not incited by "world imperialism" but is a just war in which a colonized people are seeking freedom. It is the duty of the Somali government, the statement continued, to support the Front.

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25X1 [REDACTED] Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi on Thursday was informed by Ambassador Eilts of the US decision to go slow in supplying arms to Somalia. Fahmi, noting he assumes the US decision was based on Somali activities in the Ogaden, said it should be possible to restrict the use of any US arms to legitimate Somali defensive purposes. He argued that the US seems again to be overlooking the nature of the Soviet threat in the Horn of Africa.

25X1 [REDACTED] Ethiopia's Chairman Mengistu, in the Egyptian view, is a Soviet surrogate. Fahmi said he is convinced that Bulgaria, at Soviet instigation, is preparing an airlift of heavy arms to Libya for transshipment to Ethiopia.

25X1 [REDACTED] The arms, Fahmi continued, would augment Mengistu's capability to move against Somalia and would result in the re-establishment of firm Soviet control in the Horn.

25X1 [REDACTED] French Foreign Minister de Guiringaud said yesterday in Nairobi that France is considering supplying defensive arms to Somalia. He stressed that only small quantities of weapons would be provided.

25X1 [REDACTED]

25X1 [REDACTED] //In the Ogaden, the Somalis may be planning to launch the third phase of their offensive--toward the remaining Ethiopian strongholds of Dire Dawa, Harar, and Jijiga--within the next several days.

25X1 [REDACTED]

25X1 [REDACTED] the Egyptian military attache in Mogadiscio told the US ambassador Sunday that he expected the Somalis to make their move within 48 hours.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //According to the Egyptian attache, the Somali offensive will take the form of a three-pronged attack on Dire Dawa, the location of the main Ethiopian air base for the region. Somalia's 26th Division, more heavily equipped with armor than the other divisions, is expected to bear the brunt of the effort to take the strongpoints. Only a few units of the 26th had been committed to the previous fighting.//

25X1 [] //The Egyptian attache states that the Somalis hope to establish a defensive line that would run from a point some 80 kilometers west of Dire Dawa through Goba and Negele in the southern provinces to Moyale on the Kenyan border. Both Goba and Negele are under attack by insurgents and may already be cut off.//

25X1 [] //The tactical situation in the Ogaden and in the southern provinces has remained essentially unchanged since late last week.

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25X1 [] //In Eritrea, insurgents of the moderate Eritrean Liberation Front are stepping up their military campaign, probably in an effort to strengthen their position vis-a-vis the other two insurgent groups, the Popular Liberation Front and the leftist Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front. ELF forces captured a town southwest of Asmara late last week and apparently are besieging the border town of Humera.//

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KENYA-ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA: Situation Report

25X1 [] //Kenya's concern over a potential Somali threat to Kenyan territory appears to be increasing in the light of recent Somali advances in the Ogaden area of Ethiopia, Western promises of arms aid to Somalia, and Kenya's military weakness.//

25X1 [] Last week Presidential Permanent Secretary Kariithi privately told a US embassy official that his government is

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convinced the Somali seizure of all or most of the Ogaden--even if Ethiopia subsequently resists it--will only whet Somalia's appetite for ethnic-Somali-inhabited parts of northeastern Kenya.

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[] He also claimed that the Somali vice president told Kenyan ethnic-Somalis in July that it would only be a matter of time before northeastern Kenya would be integrated into "greater Somalia." Earlier, Kenyan officials simply complained that the vice president did not deny Somali interest in the area.

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[] Defense Ministry Permanent Secretary Kiereini said that however desirable it might be to reduce Soviet influence in Somalia, now is not the time for the West to provide arms. He said he hoped the US would refrain from supplying any arms to Somalia that would directly or indirectly be used against Ethiopia now and against Kenya later. He appeared absolutely convinced that the current Somali-supported military operations in Ethiopia are only a rehearsal for absorption of northeastern Kenya.

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[] //Part of Kenya's concern is attributable to a growing awareness of its military vulnerability. Nairobi has avoided implementation of its long-standing mutual defense pact with Ethiopia and even pulled back some units from the border area when the fighting between Ethiopian and Somali forces escalated last month. This occurred shortly after clashes in late June with Somali-backed guerrillas who were passing through northern Kenya en route to Ethiopia. Kiereini said--on grounds that there had been no formal declaration of war--that Kenyan support to Ethiopia would be limited to passive cooperation.//

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[] //Kenya's army of fewer than 10,000 men is not designed for operations against larger, better equipped forces like those of Somalia, and it would not be able to repel an invasion. The clashes with Somali insurgents in late June apparently have given new impetus to plans for the purchase of some \$240 million of military equipment and for considerably expanding the army and the air force.

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ISRAEL: West Bank

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The Begin government's decision to extend additional government services to Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza strip appears--like the earlier legalization of three West Bank settlements--to be designed to bind these territories closer to Israel. Similar incremental steps are likely to follow, such as extending Israel's electric power grid and telephone services into these areas. Initial Arab reaction has been predictably negative; the Gaza Municipal Council rejected the Israeli decision.

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By moving in this gradual manner, Israeli leaders may calculate that they can finesse any confrontation with the US over their occupational policies. At the same time, these actions serve to underscore their determination to retain the West Bank and Gaza strip.

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The government has skillfully defended its latest decision as "humanitarian" and brushed aside charges of "creeping annexationism" leveled by Labor party opponents. A government spokesman noted that the decision would not change the legal status of Arab inhabitants and that the government would not do so without the approval of the Knesset.

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The spokesman declared that the decision was only intended to extend to the Arabs the same health care and other social services enjoyed by Israeli citizens--a line Israeli leaders are likely to use to justify the move to US officials. They may also contend in private that the decision was necessary to placate some of their right-wing constituents who favor full integration of these areas into Israel.

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We have no reason to believe, however, that Begin's goals differ significantly from those of his militant followers. In fact, the decision does not apply to the Druses who live on the Golan Heights or Bedouins living in the occupied Sinai--areas where the government is prepared to make territorial

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concessions in return for peace with the Arabs--but only to the West Bank and Gaza strip, which Begin regards as "liberated."

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EGYPT-USSR: Cotton Exports

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[redacted] President Sadat, in a major address Sunday, announced that Egypt was suspending cotton exports to the USSR in response to the Soviets' embargo of arms and spare parts to Egypt and their refusal to allow Czechoslovakia to deliver tanks that Egypt has already paid for. The suspension will have no significant economic impact on either country, but it is likely to scotch reconciliation talks between foreign ministers Fahmi and Gromyko, scheduled to resume this fall.

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[redacted] Sadat stressed that Moscow's latest demands for resuming arms deliveries--that Cairo make a statement on the nature of political ties between the two countries and that payment be made in hard currency--were unacceptable. The move may prompt renewed domestic criticism from those who believe he has already gone too far in alienating the Soviets. Some Egyptians are concerned that Sadat, in his efforts to court the US, is pursuing policies that could ultimately injure Egypt.

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[redacted] Moreover, Sadat's actions are unlikely to force the USSR into a more accommodating position. Rather, they will probably lead the Soviets to reconsider their attempts at reconciliation with Sadat, especially since they come on the heels of Brezhnev's call for improved Egyptian-Soviet relations.

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[redacted] Unless the cotton embargo is maintained for several months, it will be a completely empty economic gesture. Almost all of the crop harvested in the fall of 1976 has already been shipped, and the 1977 crop will not be ready for shipment until September. Moreover, because Egypt normally saturates Western hard-currency markets before releasing cotton to other trading partners, shipments to the USSR and Eastern Europe rarely leave Alexandria before midwinter.

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[redacted] Even if the cotton embargo were continued, little economic hardship would be involved. The USSR is basically self-sufficient in cotton, and Egypt can market its cotton for hard currency elsewhere.

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ISRAEL: Mobilization Exercises

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[REDACTED] //Israeli military forces held another mobilization exercise yesterday, the second in the past two months. According to Israeli military authorities, the exercise involved only a few thousand reservists and some civilian vehicles. There are no indications at this time that the exercise was connected with reported Israeli intentions to undertake military operations in southern Lebanon.//

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[REDACTED] Since the October 1973 war, the Israelis have periodically conducted mobilization exercises to test procedures designed to correct deficiencies uncovered during the war. Like the one in June, yesterday's exercise involved the method of callup in which all public communications media are used to notify reservists to report to duty. Israel also has a silent method of callup to accomplish mobilization in a less obvious way when necessary and when time permits. [REDACTED]

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OAU-CHAD-LIBYA: Meeting

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[redacted] The border dispute between Chad and Libya was taken up last week at a ministerial-level meeting in Libreville of an Organization of African Unity mediation commission created by last month's OAU summit. The meeting did not discuss the matter of Libyan support for Chadian Muslim insurgents.

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[redacted] The commission set up a committee of experts to examine conflicting legal claims underlying the border dispute, which has seen Libya claim and occupy a 120-mile-wide strip of

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land across the length of Chad's northern border. The committee--which is to report recommendations to the mediation commission in three to six months--apparently hopes to visit the disputed area and has asked both Chad and Libya to facilitate its work.

25X1 [] Libya--whose foreign minister refused to attend the meeting--was represented only by its ambassador to Gabon.

25X1 [] Nigeria and Niger have been trying to promote bilateral talks between Chad and Libya. According to unconfirmed press reports, Libyan President Qadhafi and Chadian President Malloum will meet today in Lagos.

25X1 [] At the same time, no progress has been made by Gabonese President Bongo, in his capacity as OAU chairman, to arrange a reconciliation meeting in Libreville between Chadian President Malloum and the principal Chadian rebel leaders due to the rebels' intransigence and rivalries with each other. Parallel efforts by Sudanese President Numayri are continuing with little success. []

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ZAIRE: Shaba Defense

25X1 [] *The Zairian army is taking defensive measures along portions of the country's southern border with Angola. The border zone is being mined to frustrate the infiltration of armed exiles who are planning a guerrilla campaign against President Mobutu's government.*

25X1 [] About 3,000 mines have been planted so far around crop fields in a border zone varying in width from 5 to 10 kilometers, depending upon topography and cultivation patterns. The army reportedly plans to commit its remaining supply of 6,000 anti-personnel mines to the border zone and has inquired about buying 12,000 more.

25X1 [] The mining effort was inspired by the army's success last month when mines placed around several manioc fields west of Luashi killed three anti-government guerrillas, who presumably had crossed from their sanctuary in food-scarce northeastern Angola. Zairian troops later ambushed a guerrilla patrol attempting to recover the bodies and killed two more guerrillas.

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[] The Zairian military is continuing regular air reconnaissance of the border and ground patrols of southwestern Shaba Region. These measures are aimed at interdicting the anti-regime exiles who fled back to Angola when their invasion of Shaba collapsed last spring. The exiles, along with recruits picked up during their short stay in Shaba, reportedly are training for a protracted guerrilla campaign against the Zairian government. Their decision to resort to guerrilla warfare was influenced by:

--The failure of their more conventional offensive.

--Angola's disinclination to support an open military invasion of Zaire.

--A fear of renewed Moroccan or other foreign intervention.

--The perception that the Zairian economy, based on mineral exports from Shaba, is vulnerable to disruption by guerrillas.

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[] Zairian defense officials expect the guerrilla campaign to be launched in earnest sometime after the start of the next rainy season, which begins around the middle of September. The Zairian military, meanwhile, is responding to sporadic hostile activity in Shaba along the Angolan border, sometimes against Angolan military units on the other side and sometimes against the few bands of armed exiles who remain in Shaba or those who cross the border to harass or forage.

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[] So far, the army retains the upper hand in Shaba; once the anticipated guerrilla campaign begins, however, the army's chances of maintaining the initiative will diminish.

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SOUTH KOREA: Human Rights

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[] //The Pak government continues to release political prisoners in a measured way. Seoul's best-known opposition leader, Kim Tae-chung, remains in prison.//

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[redacted] //Seventeen political prisoners were released yesterday, along with some 2,400 convicts from regular prisons throughout the country. Fifteen dissidents were released last month. The total number of political prisoners in South Korea is estimated to be between 150 and 180.//

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[redacted] //The Pak government is handling the releases in a low-key manner, evidently hoping to improve US - South Korean relations while minimizing the appearance of bowing to US presence. The releases have met with a generally positive response in Seoul, but they have been clouded somewhat by Kim Tae-chung's continued imprisonment. Unlike most of those released so far, Kim and a core group of other dissidents have refused to sign statements of repentance.//

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[redacted] //The government is likely to continue to use psychological pressure to bring Kim and others around, and some form of compromise ultimately is possible.

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SPAIN-EC: Membership Application

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[redacted] *Spanish Prime Minister Suarez will visit several European Community countries this month to kick off a diplomatic offensive in support of Spain's EC application. He will also use these visits, as well as additional ones this fall, to solicit views on possible Spanish membership in NATO.*

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[redacted] Suarez chose to concentrate first on the four EC countries that least favor Spain's entry. Foreign Minister Oreja told Ambassador Stabler that he and Suarez plan to leave for The Hague on August 29 and then go on to Copenhagen, Paris, and Rome. The Netherlands and Denmark have been skeptical about Spain's commitment to democratic institutions; France and Italy are worried about competition from Spanish goods.

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[redacted] Suarez plans to complete the trip before a special meeting of EC leaders in Antwerp scheduled for September 23 to discuss enlargement of the EC. The EC Council is expected to ask later in the fall for the Commission's opinion on the Spanish application.

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[redacted] Oreja said that he and Suarez will visit Ireland, the UK, Germany, and Belgium this fall. The foreign minister stressed the great importance that he and Suarez place on the personal contacts they will make with the leaders of the EC countries. They obviously hope to repeat the success that Portuguese Prime Minister Soares had during his visit to EC countries last February, when seeking EC acceptance of Portugal's application for full membership.

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[redacted] Suarez will also want to sound out other West European countries on the issue of Spanish membership in NATO, and he is likely to use his private soundings and his public reception to help convince the Spanish military and populace of the advantages of NATO membership.

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